



AMHERST COUNTY SERVICE AUTHORITY

**P. O. BOX 100
MADISON HEIGHTS, VA 24572-0100
PHONE (434) 845-1605
FAX (434) 845-1613
acsava@acsava.com**

December 17, 2020

RE: COVID-19

Dear Valued Customer:

You are receiving this notice as a requirement of a recent pandemic guideline issued to public utilities by Virginia's Governor. The previous one having expired, and the pandemic and its impacts continuing, the Governor has established a new moratorium on cut-offs of water and wastewater services arising from COVID-19. This new moratorium is now in effect and will last until the Governor cancels the current emergency or until the current State budget year expires June 30, 2021. What this means is that ACSA will not terminate water or wastewater services for unpaid bills caused by hardship arising from the pandemic. Expanding on the Governor's policy, ACSA will also not assess penalties for late bill payments caused by COVID-19. We will keep you informed as updates on this matter are brought to our attention.

As in notices issued to customers earlier in 2020, we caution you that the moratorium is not a waiver or cancellation of unpaid bills; it is only a temporary postponement of cutoffs for non-payment during the pandemic. It is advised that customers do everything possible to pay at least a portion of their bills, and to get on installment payment plans, if needed, which ACSA is happy to execute. When the moratorium expires, ACSA will resume cut-offs and it would be unwise to have a large unpaid account balance at that time. ACSA is a business; we get no tax revenues or other regular assistance from local, State, or Federal government, must collect revenues from payment of bills and fees to stay financially viable and maintain operations, and must terminate service for unpaid accounts that are deemed uncollectable.

The State has established a Municipal Utility Relief Program to help customers with unpaid utility bills caused by the pandemic. ACSA will soon receive \$25,569.32 from the Program to be applied to accounts with current unpaid balances over thirty (30) days old from the period between March 1 and December 30, 2020. The total of ACSA accounts in arrears exceeds the money we will receive, and ACSA wants to assist those most in need, so ACSA will prioritize this money for eligible customers with unpaid balances that are currently on, and paid up to date on, bill payment installment plans. However, it is possible that the total number of those customers applying will not use all of the money, so we also request ACSA customers who are not on, or up to date paid on, installment plans to also apply. ACSA wants to use all of this money to the best benefit possible for our customers; we do not want to return it to the State and we ask that you apply as soon as possible, whether you or on an installment plan or not.

Unfortunately, time is short. This Program was created at the end of November and any money not used must be returned by January 29. To be eligible, customers must be able and willing to attest that their account arrearages are due to COVID-19 impacts. The attached Customer Intake Form must be completed and returned to the Water Office. ACSA will take all Forms received as of close of business Wednesday, January 20; determine which are complete, Program-eligible, and currently on, and paid up to date on, installment plans; total the arrearages of those accounts; divide that sum by the available Program money; apply that percentage to each arrearage; and inform each customer accordingly. We will repeat the process for other customers with unpaid account balances if there is any money left over.

We also urge all customers with unpaid account balances that are not on an installment plan to do so as soon as possible. The current Program was hurriedly created by the State to assist citizens by the end of 2020, was totally unexpected, and one never knows when another such benefit like this will become suddenly available with a very short response time. Even if there is no repeat of this Program, it is advisable to be on an installment plan and keep your account balance as low as possible for when the moratorium ends, and also be in the best possible position to take advantage of any future boon. ACSA will be happy to assist customers get on a payment plan. Please stop by the Water Office at 113 Phelps Road in Madison Heights or call us at 434-845-1605 or email us at acsava@acsava.com.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We will look forward to receiving your Form, reducing your owed balance if possible, and, as always, doing all we can to provide you the best, most cost-effective water and wastewater services in central Virginia.

Sincerely,

AMHERST COUNTY SERVICE AUTHORITY



Robert A. Hopkins, PE
Executive Director



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COVID-19 MUNICIPAL UTILITY RELIEF PROGRAM Utility Arrearage Assistance Customer Intake Form

This CARES Act assistance:

- May assist with unpaid bills between March 1 and December 30, 2020, and cannot be used for unpaid bills prior to or after this period or for reimbursement for bills paid during this period;
- Is a one-time opportunity, with one grant per residential household or non-residential account holders and their successors.

General Information:

Date of Application: _____ Name of Applicant: _____
Service Address: _____ Applicant Phone: _____
Account Number: _____ Applicant Email: _____
Total Current Account Arrearage, March 1 – December 30, 2020: _____

Residential Customers:

Name of Account Holder: _____

Indicate below the Program-applicable cause(s) of economic hardship due to COVID-19:

You are unwilling or unable to work at previous employment due to high risk of COVID-19 _____
You got COVID-19 and cannot work _____ You cannot find work due to COVID-19 _____
You have been laid off _____ You have a reduction in work hours _____
Your place of employment has closed _____ You have lost child or spousal support _____
Must stay home to care for children due to closure of school and/or day care center _____
Other (describe) _____

Non-Residential Customers:

Name of Account Holder: _____
Property or Business Name: _____

Is the utility account arrearage due to economic hardship caused by COVID-19: Yes _____ (Eligible)
No _____ (Ineligible)

Explain the COVID-19 economic hardship: _____

Name of Account Holder: _____

Name of Applicant: _____

Applicant's Certification:

- I desire to receive any assistance to which I am legally entitled under this Program and its specifications.
- I certify that the reason I am eligible for this CARES Act assistance is correct, to the best of my belief or knowledge.
- I understand that the agencies involved in this Program may verify any or all of the information I have provided in this application and that my signature on this form gives permission for the staff at Amherst County Service Authority and/or Amherst County to verify records as necessary to verify my eligibility for assistance and I will provide such information as is needed for the staff at either agency to verify.
- I declare, to the best of my belief or knowledge, that:
 - Residential applicants: I am the only person living in the household at the address shown who has applied for this assistance; or,
 - Non-Residential applicants: I am the only person who has applied for or on behalf of the non-residential account holder, including any successor(s), at the address shown on this form, and that I am not a government account holder.
- I certify that this customer has not received CARES Act relief for any of the arrearages I am applying for from any other source, including Rebuild VA grants.
- I understand that if I give false information or withhold information in order to make myself, or anyone I am representing, eligible for benefits which are not entitled under this Program or its specifications, or apply for such assistance at more than one location or for more than one account in arrears, I can be prosecuted for fraud and/or denied assistance in the future.

Printed Name

Signature

Title (for non-residential account applicant)

Amherst County Service Authority Information:

Screener _____

Date _____

Action Taken: _____

Explanation: _____
